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though this Art-Object is a light and glory in the world, or a star in the heavens, what is that to it? it knows not of it; just as the Man, wedded to his finite use, sees no infinite, or Religious, relation which gives him the Beautiful glory of an infinite Use.

And so, also, is there necessity for sacrifice in our resurrecting of this Beauty from that outer form in which it is fixed and dead. This restoring to its ideal being can take place only in other minds than that of the Artist, and, after all, must be also a painstaking.¹ The thought must go down upon this Outer object, concentrate in it, and recreate that Beauty which it only suggests. And then this Beauty wings itself away from it, like a spirit, and the object itself is again left to its cold and lifeless existence. Thus Subjective Art stands ever isolated from its Object, if this be taken as either a finite or as an Outer object. The Artist's love in creating it is only a self-love, which for it is hate, were it at all sensible to either love or hate.

DANTE'S EPOCHS OF CULTURE, AND THE RELATION OF THE "CONVITO" TO THE "DIVINA COMMEDIA."

BY H. K. HUGO DELFF. TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY A. E. KROEGER.

Let me be permitted to give in advance a general sketch of my views, preliminary to illustrations and proofs. I distinguish three periods in the development of the poet's mind and character. The first period is the time of his youth, characterized by the relation to an earthly love, and recorded in the *Vita Nuova*. It is Dante's love for Beatrice, which is here to be taken in the sense of the Old German adoration of woman, in which, according to Tacitus, the present *numen* is worshipped; for we behold devel-

¹ *I. e.*, as to sensibility—sense-knowing; for this Outer Art-Object must be resolved through that. The same may perhaps be said of objects of *historical* representation, at least in part, since there is to some extent a necessity, and, still more, a disposition, to see them as *sensible* objects.

oped in woman, so far as we look upon her in her ideal, that which is so holy in the childlikeness of the child and in childlike innocence: the immediate unity with the divine roots of individuality, from which the energetic will of man separates or dirempts itself in decided individualization. Dante conceives Beatrice as a revelation of the Infinite; in his love-ardor for the earthly beloved he was with and in her, at the same time, in an unconscious manner One with the Infinite, even as he, in ardor for her, was at the same time in ardor for the Divine, the Infinite. This was *la diritta via* of the first song of the Divine Comedy—the direct way; that is, the immediateness for the reflection, which enters here and purposely loses itself in the current of the Divine; this was the innocence to which the opposition had not yet disclosed nor contradiction yet opposed itself, and which, therefore, followed the drift of her nature, which, according to Dante, is the drift of God, the instinct of the soul, which carried her upward on its wings. In regard to scientific investigation, we shall still find independent thinking slumbering; and, politically, the poet seems to have been either indifferent, or else following his Guelphic family traditions.

The perturbation caused by the death of the Beloved soon ripened his manly independence; and we see the poet enter upon the second period of his life. In regard to mental development, this epoch is characterized by the abstract, reflecting understanding—the scientific phase whereof was at that time the Oriental Arabic Philosophy and the begetter of the Scholasticism of Thomas Aquinas and Dun Scotus, whereas its ethical phase was Liberalism. We find both sides of this epoch recorded in the *Convito*.

This second period led Dante into his third, partly by reason of the fruitless endeavors of abstract and formalistic science—fruitless, because they could not be brought into connection with the vital issues of the day—and partly by reason of the painful experience resulting from the consequences of his liberal principles; that is, from the demagogy of the Guelphic nobility in Florence, as well as from the general selfishness of parties, that took the marrow out of all the good and great enterprises of that time. This third period is characterized, in its intellectual aspect, by intellectual contemplation, by Dante's concentration on that same

contemplation with the living, divine truth—Mysticism. This is, in its ethical or political respect, a sentiment which one might call conservatism, provided that this word be not taken in a partisan sense; a sentiment which insists that all the figurations of the World and of History are ordered by God—that is, by the idea of a universal and independent principle of organization. Dante characterizes this third epoch as a *return* to the *diritta via* of the first, and, hence, as a restitution of the immediate unity with the Infinite of the time of youthful innocence, now accomplished by reflection and purpose, and, penetrating contradiction, also going beyond it. The second epoch, on the other hand, is to him a wandering in the desert, in the *selva erronea* of this life. The literary records of this epoch are the Divine Comedy, and, I believe, also the book *De Monarchia*. The letters of Dante's later life, as well as some sonnets and canzonets, might be added.

This division of Dante's periods of culture and literary epochs may perhaps meet approbation on this account: that it bears the impress of universally typical, generally human, traits, and that, if not every man, at least the most of men, develop in the same manner (that is, they learn wisdom by knocking themselves against the wall), and that the whole race of man passes through the same process.

It is known from the History of Philosophy that after an epoch of abstract philosophy has passed away, and has been either paralyzed by the combination of scholasticism with mysticism, or previously overcome by mysticism (on the one side take Hugo of St. Victor, on the other side take Richard of St. Victor and Bernard of Clairvaux), the publication of the Aristotelian writings and their Arabian commentators, which was accomplished by the exertions of Frederic II von Hohenstauffen, created a new epoch, which was by no means altogether thrust aside by the masters of scholastic theology, and to which, on the contrary, scholastic theology became again serviceable, by dissolving altogether in logical ratiocination and arbitrary casuistries, after the death of those masters, and, notably, of Thomas Aquinas.

It is also well known that Mysticism placed itself in decided opposition as well to that philosophy as to that theological scholasticism. Now, Dante in his second epoch was such a philosopher and scholastic theologian, and the product and recorded document

of this tendency of his mind is the *Convito*. Hence the *Convito* stands, as it were, in opposition to the *Divina Commedia*.

The fact that Dante had to complain of an intellectual aberration he himself confesses in the Divine Comedy; but at the same time he indicates this aberration unmistakably. When he asks Beatrice (*Purg. XXXIII, 82*) why her words flow so much higher than his comprehension that he seems to lose them in proportion as he seeks to gather them, she replies:

“Perchè conoschi . . . quella scuola,
Ch' hai seguitata, e veggi sua dottrina,
Come può seguitar la mia parola . . .”

How far finite science, seized in the finite understanding and in its abstractness and eccentricity, is removed from the wisdom which is concentric with the Infinite—

“E veggi vostra via dalla divina
Distar cotanto, quanto si discorda
Da terra il ciel, che più alto festina . . .”

He sees the opposition of both—that is, of Scholasticism and Mysticism, which is like that of Heaven and Earth, the Finite and the Infinite, Nature and God, Transcendence, etc.

Again, *Par. III, 28, 29*, Beatrice says:

“Ti rivolge, come suole, a voto,
Vere sustanzie sono . . .”

The opposition cannot be more sharply expressed than by the *rivolversi a voto* and the *vere sustanzie*. In the same manner I look upon Beatrice's reproach, *Purg. XXXI, 58*:

“Non ti dovean gravar le penne in giuso
—Ad aspettar più colpi—o pargoletta,
O altra vanità con sì breve uso.”

Pargoletta is philosophy; the *donna gentile* becomes *pargoletta*, with other vanities. Bonaventura counts pretended Wisdom among vanities in his *Soliloquia*. Beatrice is not the earthly beloved, who lives merely in memory; she is the Bride of God—that is, the Platonic World of Ideas, the World of God, which

contains the root of all created worlds and orders of the world, and hence is at the same time the *Mother of True Wisdom*.

It is, therefore, beyond a doubt that Dante had to repent of intellectual sins, and that these sins lay in the direction of the philosophy and scholasticism—in other words, of the Aristotelism—of his time. We have no definite expressions in regard to his political sins, though repentance on that score is by no means excluded. Beatrice's reproaches, preceding the passage just quoted, are quite general. She says, *Purg. XXX, 126*:

“Questi sì tolse a me, e diessi altrui—”

that is, to other Gods, but not to other women, for Beatrice is here a potentiality of the Godhead.¹ In this sense she continues, *130*:

“E volse i passi suoi per via non vera
Immagini di ben seguendo false,
Che nulla promission rendon intera”—

Immagini di ben, in the sense of *Par. V, 7*, as is also made immediately manifest by the opposition, *XXXI, 22*:

“... perentro i miei desiri,
Che ti menavano ad amar lo bene,
Di là dal qual non è a che si aspiri.”

Dante answers quite as generally, *V, 34*:

“... le presenti cose
Col falso lor piacer volser miei passi,
Tosto che il vostro viso si nascose.”

The sensual presence, the sensual and finite relations, had imprisoned him. But I believe that this general framework includes especially Dante's political activity. For Dante's picture in history has only two important aspects, the one philosophical and the other political. Nay, the poet introduces himself, not in his

¹ This is not to be taken as a denial of the fact, repeatedly substantiated (for instance, in the letters), that Dante was not in love once or many times. But this is, after all, no crime, unless it exceeds in sensual consequence the sixth consequence, or is permanently and recklessly absorbing, which is not to be assumed in Dante's case. There was no occasion to make of this a separate chapter in the *Divine Comedy*; indeed, it would have been downright ridiculous to have done so.

private relations—compare the principle expressed in *Convito I, 2*: “nella camera de’ suoi pensier se medesimo riprendere dee e piangere li suoi difetti e non palese”—but, in so far as he was a public person, as philosopher, author, and politician.

But we find a direct allusion to his political change of views in *De Monarchia*, in the well-known phrase *populi vana meditantēs, ut ipse solebam*. The political sentiments of this work are altogether in the manner of the *Divina Commedia*. The fundamental principle of the Empire is here complemented by reverence for history, the recognition of the historical element, and the significance of hereditary nobility. The special attention devoted to the religious ends of mankind and the affairs of the Church is altogether in the vein of the Mystic. I would therefore believe that this book belongs to the third period. Now, in that confession I see it stated that there was a period in Dante’s life when freedom was also to him a bride—that is, when he was enraptured with that “false freedom” whose regulative principle is unbridled “desire,” the she-wolf of the *Inferno*, and whereof Dante speaks in his letters to Henry VII, to the Italian Cardinals, to the Florentines, and in many passages of the *Divina Commedia*. This freedom, or liberty, is followed by equality. This is generally understood by intelligent people, as we know, in this way, that not external historical rights, but internal rights, or otherwise merit (labor, acquirement, etc.), deserve advancement. Taken in this sense, this equality is the fundamental principle of the industrial faction of a nation, and the basis of a monetary nobility, of a patriciate or optimate. In the year 1295 or 1296—five or six years after the death of Beatrice—Dante became a member of the “societies,” and therewith began his political activity. It is my opinion that this step, as indeed it could not have been otherwise expected, was not a means to an end, but a conviction. In the conflict between the *Donati* and the *Cerchi*, he embraced the latter cause. The former were unquestionably the degenerate nobles or feudal lords, who attempted to obtain supreme rule at any price—the very reason why we find them subsequently leagued together with the lower populace as true demagogues. The latter, on the other hand, were the wealthy descendants of the money nobility, the representatives of the *bourgeois* class. The former gained the victory, and the latter, after their banishment, naturally sought a

support in the party of order—that is, in the Imperialists, the Ghibellines. In doing so, they abandoned liberty in the sense of the Florentine Democracy, but not equality in their own interpretation. For this was their vital element, and, abandoning this, they would have had to abandon themselves. Whatsoever man acquired and made his own, for the sake of his own and of general existence, was, after all, a token of his validity. Dante participated in this change, and the record of it is the fourth book of his *Convito*. In this book Dante is a Ghibelline, an Imperialist, but also an embittered enemy of rank privileges, and an inspired advocate of the principle of universal claim to distinction through personal merit.

He goes even so far as to say that his reply to the demand that nobility should be based only on historical claims would be a reply not in words, but “by the knife.” Thus it turns out that in the *Divina Commedia* his own party becomes a “malicious and stupid set,” of whose bestiality its passing away will furnish the proof. He separates from them altogether, and becomes a party unto himself; nay, it is even known that he violently condemns the industrial greed of gain as well as the arrogance and ambition resulting therefrom, a state of things wherein no one remains any longer within his order, but each individual and each class endeavors to equal, if not to rise above, the other; and that he longingly looks back upon the old times of simple ancestral morals, when the old gifted families (since broken up by adventurers) were the rulers. Indeed, we see how, in evident opposition to his *Convito*, he glories in the historical continuity of his family even in heaven—a matter upon which he does not neglect to lay stress.

In the second part of the *Convito*, Chapter xiii, Dante reports that after the death of his beloved, nothing was at first capable of giving him comfort.

Soon afterward, *dopo alquanto tempo*, when he began to think of a cure, he hit upon the celebrated book of Boëthius, *De consolatione philosophiæ*, and Cicero's *Lælius*. And “as it happens that one who seeks silver may find gold,” so he not only found here comfort, but was also led to the study of other authors and scientific works, reflecting on which he finally came to the conclusion that philosophy was the *Donna*, the object of adoration, of those authors, and, consequently, the very highest matter.

Hence, from that time he began to hunt up the places where "she shows herself truthfully," *le scuole de' religiosi e le disputazioni de' filosofanti*. We know from the History of Philosophy what those "schools" and "disputations" signified.

A new passion, *nuovo amore*, took, therefore, hold of Dante. In conformity with the language and the spirit of that time, he represented this new love, philosophy, to himself as a *donna*, bending down upon him, the abandoned one, in an act of pity. This *donna gentile* is held to be the same one who is also mentioned towards the close of the *Vita Nuova*. But in the *Vita* the new passion has already been conquered again by the old one, and, since the composition of the *Vita Nuova* belongs to a much earlier period than that of the *Convito*, it may, after all, be possible that Dante was in a state of self-deception, and that the *donna gentile* of the *Vita Nuova* is a real person. This, it is urged, fits also more with Beatrice, who there also appears as a real person. But, after all, it is not exact. Even the *Vita Nuova* is in so far allegorical and symbolic, as Beatrice is unquestionably more to the poet than the daughter of Portinari—namely, a revelation of the Infinite. Hence, I believe that the victory of the old love, recounted in the *Vita Nuova*, was only a preliminary victory. A fight was necessary, and then victory wavered. At one time, when Dante closed his elegy to the beloved, he thought that the whole matter was decided. But the new principle pressed itself forward anew, and finally the poet himself was compelled to submit to it altogether.

When Dante says, in the first chapter of the first part of the *Convito*, that he does not intend thereby to disavow the *Vita Nuova*, but rather to supplement it, he does not mean to say that both works have one and the same theme—namely, the rights of the Empire. What he does wish to say is this: that both works have the same object in view—the Divine; but that this object is represented differently in each work, according to the status of internal development within him. For, as he expresses it directly afterwards, one must speak and act differently at different periods of life.

Thus we have arrived at the point from which to illustrate the contrast between the *Convito* and the *Divina Commedia*. In the very first chapter we read :

“Ciascuna cosa, da provvidenzia di propria natura impinta, è inclinabile alla sua perfezione; onde, acciochè la scienza è l' ultima perfezione della nostra anima, nelle quale sta la nostra ultima felicità, tutti naturalmente al suo desiderio siamo soggetti.”

Now, compare with this, for instance, the XXXIII Canto of the *Paradiso*. Here we have God (v. 46), and the union with God, *il fine di tutti i disii*, and hence also that, wherein *sta la nostra ultima felicità*, outside of it everything is imperfect (v. 106), within it all is perfection. But this unity with God in the transcendence (the *transumanar*, *Par. I, 64*) is also, as we shall see, the express negation of the *Scienza*, or of that principle, from which Dante in the *Convito* causes the final blessedness and perfection to emanate. The distinction is not to be mistaken; here science, there unity with God in actual contemplation. But this distinction is one of the opposition.

The next words—“Per li miseri alcuna cosa ho reservata, la quale agli occhi loro già è piu tempo ho dimostrata”—I also relate to the canzonets. For these, as we know, were composed by Dante as early as his residence in Florence, and in the first glow of his new passion. Subsequently political activity took hold of him, interrupting for a while his scientific studies. They were resumed in the leisure which he found in exile, and the fruit of that new return was the commentary to the canzonets, the *Convito*.

It remained unfinished, when that great revolution in the poet's mind and mode of thinking began to break forth, which has its expression in the *Divina Commedia*.

In that same chapter we find science still called “il pane degli angeli. O beati quei pochi, che seggono a quella mensa ove il pane degli angeli si mangia, e miseri quelli, che colle pecore hanno commune cibo.” The angel is of an intellectual nature, and God himself is only the *actus purissimus* of conceptions (of λόγος—that is, the conceptions of the understanding, which are abstract; that is, externally formal, and in themselves separate and apart in contradistinction to the ideas of reason, which are truly concrete; that is, wherein thought and essence are identical). In the *Divina Commedia*, on the contrary, God himself is this angel's bread, whereof the souls feed without ever being satiated (*Par. II, 11*). Simplicity has equal share with high intelligence in this bread,

and only vulgar pride of learning could think of ranking this simplicity with the faculties of the brute creation.

In the Second Tract, in the sixth chapter, the mode of deducing the system of angelic hierarchies from the trinity is characterized as empty, scholastic phantasm of the same kind, which is so energetically condemned, for instance, *Par. XIII, 91*.

In the third chapter Dante says that, although we can have no sufficiently sure knowledge of the arrangement of heaven, there is in the speculations of reason (of the understanding, *della ragione*) an independent interest of their own, which exceeds in value likewise the certainty of sensuous cognition. I should think this ought to characterize sufficiently the one-sided theoretical stand-point of the *Convito*.

In the fifth chapter we read: "Li movitori sono sustanze separate di materia, cioè intelligenze le quali *la volgare gente* chiama angeli." Theological phraseology is here, therefore, lowered to a level with vulgar mode of expression in an unmistakably contemptuous way.

In the eighth chapter Dante says that the highest nobility of man consists in the understanding (*la ragione*), and that the peculiar act of the *ratio* is thinking. This is further explained (*III, 2*) as follows:

"Il Filosofo nel secondo 'dell' Anima' partendo le potenze di quella, dice che l' anima *principalmente* ha tre potenze, cioè vivere, sentire e ragionare . . . E quella anima, che tutte queste potenze comprende, è perfettissima di tutte l' altre. E l' anima umana, la qual è colla nobiltà *della potenza ultima* cioè ragione, partecipa della divina natura a guisa di sempiterna intelligenza; perocchè l' anima è tanto in quella sovrana potenza nobilitata e dinudata da materia, che la divina luce raggia in quella; e però è l' uomo divino animale da' filosofi chiamato. In questa nobilissima parte dell' anima sono piu virtù . . . *E tutte queste nobilissime virtù si chiama insieme con questo vocabolo, cioè mente.*"

It results from this, that on the stand-point of the *Convito* Dante regards *ratio*, or the understanding, the organ of abstract philosophy, of "panlogism," as the highest intellectual capacity of man, and as in itself concentric with the Divine intellect, and that he in no way distinguishes from it the faculty of reason, the *mens* or *intellectus*. This is a natural consequence, indeed, of the

Aristotelian point of view, which looks upon God also as only the *actus purissimus* of the *rationes* or λόγoi. But this view is in decided contradiction to that of the *Divina Commedia*.

For the latter work distinguishes reason, as the organ of the infinite, from the understanding, which belongs to the finite, and holds that the latter, having no direct relation whatever to the Divine, ought to be transcended, as I have shown elsewhere. The understanding, as the intellectual activity in the sphere of the finite, is simply the organ of the pagan or extra-Christian philosophy, which never measures the endless path, but in its unquenched yearning remains excluded from the heights of absolute truth. To unlock this organ of the Infinite was the great achievement of the Redeemer.

In the *Convito*, on the contrary, the *ratio* is excluded from the contemplation of the Divine only in an accidental way—namely, by its connection with matter. This exclusion is a consequence of the human constitution in this earthly life, and a consequence which neither can be removed, nor is desired to be got rid of in this life. We shall recur to it again.

Referring to the words, *II*, 9: “Sarà bello terminare lo parlare di quella viva Beatrice beata, della quale più parlare in questo libro non intendo,” Fraticelli observes: “Non intende più parlare della Beatrice, vera donna ‘in carne e in ossa e colle sue giunture,’ perchè vuol parlare della Beatrice allegorica, cioè della sapienza.” Here the Divine has assumed another form of representation—that is, the garb of philosophy.

This form is (*II*, 16) the *better* donna, for whose sake he leaves Beatrice with honest regrets. We must also regard as conclusive the solemn assurance in the same place: “*Dico e affermo*, che la donna di cui io innamorai appresso lo primo amore fu la bellissima e onestissima figlia dello imperadore dell’ universo, cioè la filosofia.” What more can one do than to swear on the honor of a man that what one says is true? It would be rather superwise to charge him with self-deception.

In the same place we find these significant words: “Questa donna è la filosofia; . . . gli occhi di questa donna sono le sue dimostrazioni, le quali dritte negli occhi dello ’ntelletto innamorano l’ anima, liberata nelle condizioni. Oh dolcissimi ed ineffabili sembianti e rubatori subitani della mente umana, che nelle

dimostrazioni appaite, veramente in voi è la salute, per la quale si fa beato, chi vi guarda, e salvo dalla morte della ignoranza."

Let the reader here compare the following verses from the *Divina Commedia*:

Par. II, 40:

"Accender ne dovria più il disio
Di veder quell' essenza, in che si vede,
Come nostra natura e Dio s' unio.
Lì si vedrà ciò, che tenem per fede,
Non dimostrato, ma fia per se noto
A guisa del ver primo che l' uom crede.

Par. XXIV, 91:

". . . la larga ploia
Dello spirito santo, ch' è diffusa
In su le vecchie e 'n su le nuove cuoia
È sillogismo, che la m' ha conchiusa
Acutamente sì, che 'n verso d' ella
Ogni dimostrazion mi pare ottusa.

Here we hear of a *morte dell' ignoranza*, just as (*III, 5*) of a *fango della stoltezza*, and (*IV, 24*) of the *selva erronea di questa vita*. By comparing parallel passages from the *Inferno*, it will be found that death, the morass, and the labyrinth are not ignorance, simplicity, and error, but sin—that is, pursuit of finite matters and interests, be they of an intellectual, moral, or political character.

According to *III, 11*, knowledge, *il sapere*, is its own purposes. Dante despises the practical man, who desires knowledge only for a utilitarian purpose.

In the last chapter of the Third Tract the author declares again in the most unmistakable manner the divergence of his ideal in the *Convito* from that of the *Divina Commedia*. Salvation through union with God can be attained by all, the simple as well as the wise. This is not the case with *la ultima felicità* of the *Convito*. He says: "*Se tutti al suo cospetto venire non potete, onorate lei ne' suoi amici.*"

We now touch, in conclusion, those numerous passages wherein the nature of the science praised by Dante is conclusively described. In *II, 15*, he says that the ultimate principles of knowl-

edge and being are attainable to us, so long as the soul is enchained by the body, only through a reflex, just as a vague gleam of light penetrates the closed eyelid, or a ray enters into the pupil of a bat. Those principles are not directly accessible to us; we are only able to draw conclusions from their effects. According to *III*, 18, and *IV*, 22, we can act or meditate on them only according to their effects; we can approach them (*III*, 15) only in the way of negation—that is, of the abstraction of finite and sensuous predicates, which is far removed from a positive determination, giving hint thereof only in nebulous outlines, as it were. But he does not (*III*, 5) find this limitedness of human knowledge regrettable, since it is God's own arrangement, He having had the fixed will to deprive us in this life of transcendent light. This must suffice us. But in that same place, in the fifteenth chapter, he holds that, since desire does not go beyond the limits of natural possibility, man cannot naturally be desirous to cognize those highest principles of life and science.

Now, these concise explanations are as much in direct contradiction with the views of the *Divina Commedia* as they abundantly illustrate the scientific stand-point of the *Convito*. In the *Divina Commedia* the limitedness of common human knowledge is, in truth, a fact for which man himself is to blame. It is the consequence of man's lapse from God, and the real hereditary sinfulness, which is, indeed, nothing but man's isolation from finity and sensuousness, and is not God's arrangement, but the fault of man himself. It was Christ's work to eradicate this original sin; his divine human nature forms the bridge on which the finite man returns to the Infinite (*Par. VII*, 25; *Purg. III*, 34, etc.). Again: According to the *Divina Commedia*, man is by nature desirous to become One with the infinite in immediate contemplation. Even the noblest productions of science and art cannot satisfy him. The limbo is the play of eternally unstilled sighs and painful resignation. In Christ this desire finds fulfilment. See the words, *Par. IV*, 124. Dante soon sees that there is no rest except in God. Arrogant science, like all "other vanities, *con sì breve uso*"—that is, which have value and validity only for this short span of time—can, after all, give no true inner satisfaction:

"Io veggio ben, che giammai non si sazia
Nostro intelletto, se 'l ver non lo illustra,

Di fuor dal qual nessun vero si spazia.
 Posasi in esso come fera in lustra,
 Tosto che giunto l' ha: e giunger puollo;
 Se non, ciascun disio sarebbe frustra."

Here, therefore, the spirit is no longer an externality to truth, but absolute truth lives internally in the spirit, and, absorbing it in its own movement, gives it by that means the internal light, wherein the spirit recognizes the truth of all things. This is the true end of all investigation (*nasce appiè del vero il dubbio*), and can be absolutely attained, in this life as well as in the next. *In hac vita*, says Dante, in his letter of dedication to the Can Grande, man can attain contemplation.

On the other side, we well recognize Dante's stand-point in the *Convito*. It is the Aristotelianism of that time, as it must form itself, when combined with pious reverence for faith and the dogma, a well-known mixture of empiricism and abstract logicism, which is now joined, in an external sort of way, by limiting traditional faith. In the words, *III*, 15: "Cioè Iddio, e la prima materia, che certissimamente non si veggono, e con tutta fede si credono essere."

This Aristotelianism is the inspiring element—that is, it is what the author has at heart, while faith is to him only a matter of respect, of learned knowledge. This can be readily felt. I will mention only one thing. At *II*, 15, we read: "Noi siamo già nell' ultima etade del seculo e attendemo veracemente la consumazione del celestiale movimento." Evidently we have here a general theological-physical opinion set forth as a scholarly note. Compare with it *Purg. XXIV*, 79:

" . . . il luogo u' fui a viver posto,
 Di giorno in giorno più di ben si spolpa,
 Ed a trista ruina par disposto."

We might also refer to *Convito III*, 7, where we read that faith is based chiefly on the miracles of Christ and his successors, while *Par. XXIX*, 100, seems to lay stress on the internal miracle, by means of which Christ is born in us. At any rate, this is the meaning conveyed all through the *Divina Commedia*.

The spirit of Dante's philosophizing in the *Convito* is altogether Aristotelian. Its principles have all an Aristotelian sense. The

preference of a theoretical life, as divine and angelic, over a practical life, and, above all, the sense and meaning of such a theorizing as abstractly comprehensible, is altogether Aristotelian. We find Aristotelian citations everywhere; and by the side of them Arabian commentaries. We also meet Thomas Aquinas, but under far other titles than those which he wears in the *Divina Commedia*, and which make him appear, in the *Convito*, not as a piously faithful theologian, but as the philosopher and exponent of THE Philosopher, and as a Scholastic. The other sides of the man, and hence, also, the sympathies which he always has for mysticism, are fully revealed only in the *Divina Commedia*. But on this Aristotelian basis I fancy that I perceive several important corner-stones of Platonism, which probably are taken from the Aristotelian New Platonism of Proclus and Iamblichus. It is well known that the book *De Causis*, which is ascribed to Proclus, and which Dante cites in the dedicatory letter to the Can Grande, and of which Philalethes has given us a luminous extract, was very current in the Middle Ages. It is Platonic when we are told (*II*, 5) that the effect has no proportion to its cause; Platonic is the thought (*III*, 7) of the continuous sequence of all Beings from out and towards God; Platonic is (*III*, 12) the marriage which philosophy (as the world of ideas) is said to have concluded with God; and Platonic is (*IV*, 19) the thought that the nature of man is nobler than that of the angels, since it unfolds its effects and fruits in a manifoldness which the simple nature of the angels does not possess. According to Plotinus and the Kabbala, this is the mission of man. Finally, we cannot misconceive the Platonic character of the thought in *III*, 12, where it is said: "God, contemplating Himself, beholds all things together, but in so far as He also has in Himself the difference of things (in the ideas as *causae primordiales*), he beholds also all things in their differences. The doctrine of ideas in the sixth chapter gives a further confirmation.